



Longboat Key News

June 12, 2026

Serving Longboat Key, St. Armands, Downtown Sarasota & Anna Maria Island

FREE

InsideLook



\$13 million view at Lido Shores ...page 9



Lager helps fund seabird rescue ...page 15



The fate and future of snook ...page 3



Drinking with the Manatees ...page 10

Whiter Than Cocaine and Worth More: Lido Gets Its Beach Back

Lido Key just got 300,000 cubic yards of brand-new beach for a relative song. The sand came out of New Pass — which means, by the laws of physics, it came off Longboat Key. And Longboat, staring down a \$33 million project of its own, would very much like the next batch back.



STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

Lido Key just got 300,000 cubic yards of brand-new beach for a relative song. The sand came out of New Pass — which means, by the laws of physics, it came off Longboat Key. And Longboat, staring down a \$33 million project of its own, would very much like the next batch back.

The crystalline white powder that cost millions of dollars and now blankets a stretch of the Florida coast is not cocaine. It is something far more precious. It is beach.

Roughly 300,000 cubic yards of fresh, sugar-white sand have been spread along the shores of Lido Key — the kind of godlike powder that pulls people in to frolic and swim, to boat and walk and run, to photograph a shoreline and believe, for a moment, that paradise is permanent. The people who use that beach are thrilled.

But the new sand is more than a postcard. It is armor. Think back two years, to when much of this region's beach ended up in the roads — when Hurricanes Helene and Milton peeled the dunes off the barrier islands and dumped them onto streets, driveways and sidewalks. Lido Key has now received a fresh blanket of

See Lido, page 12

Mud, Money and a Final Vote: LDK Decides the Fate of Its 88 Canals

The appeal of Longboat Key has always come down to a single, simple promise.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

For the snowbird trading a Buffalo winter for a dock on the bay, or the retired executive who spent thirty years dreaming of a skiff and a sunset, the appeal of Longboat Key has always come down to a single, simple promise: step off your back porch, drop the boat in the water, and go.

Fishing the grass flats at first light. Idling out through the pass for grouper and snapper. A cocktail cruise up the Intracoastal as the sun drops behind Anna Maria Island. This is the life the island sells, and in large measure it is the life that built its blue-chip real estate market. People do not pay seven figures

See Canals, page 12

Wimbledon 2026? Everyone Good Is Hurt, Sulking, or Nineteen

My own nervous breakdown is still the more predictable event this month. Because Wimbledon is starting, and forecasting the 2026 men's champion is currently about as scientific as forecasting the price of crude oil.



STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

First, a Word About My Deteriorating Mental Health: As I write this, the New York Knicks lead the NBA Finals three games to one. They need one win — one — for their first title since the Nixon administration, back when men wore shorts the size of cocktail napkins and felt nothing about it.

So naturally I have begun pricing one-way U-Hauls to Youngstown.

Because if they blow this, I have a plan. Plan A is to dissolve myself entirely in a home-brewed slurry of GLP-1s and gin until I weigh nothing, want nothing, and feel nothing from the ribs down. Plan B, which is darker, is to vanish into the backcountry of rural Ohio, reinvent myself in

a half-condemned mill town as a man named Gary who fixes lawnmowers, and die having never again seen a television.

I want to be clear: my team is winning. Being a fan is not a hobby. It is a diagnosis.

And here's the humbling part — my own nervous breakdown is still the more predictable event this month. Because Wimbledon is also starting, and forecasting the 2026 men's champion is currently about as scientific as forecasting the price of crude oil, which lately has had the EKG of a man being repeatedly goosed.

The Betting Markets Are in Therapy

Men's tennis is normally the most predictable spectacle on Earth. You
See Wimbledon, page 11



**JEFF
RHINELANDER**

941-685-3590

Jeff@jeffrhineland.com



**COURTNEY
TARANTINO**

941-893-7203

courtney.tarantino@floridamoves.com



443F John Ringling Blvd. • Sarasota, FL 34236



BIRD KEY • SARASOTA
605 Wild Turkey Lane
3BR/2.5BA • \$1,795,000



BEACHES OF LONGBOAT KEY
775 Longboat Club Rd. #203
3BR/3BA • Full Gulf View • \$1,750,000



L'AMBIANCE • LONGBOAT KEY
435 L'Ambiance Dr #J703
3BR/2BA/1HB • \$4,495,000



BIRD KEY • SARASOTA
570 Spoonbill Drive
5BR/6.5BA • FULL BAYFRONT • \$7,800,000



BIRD KEY • SARASOTA
259 Robin Drive
3BR/3FB/2HB • FULL BAYFRONT • \$7,900,000



COUNTRY CLUB SHORES • LONGBOAT KEY
510 Wedge Lane
4BR/3BA • Canal front • \$1,990,000



CREATIVE KITCHENS & BATHS

YOU CREATE THE DREAM — WE CREATE THE REALITY

LEADING CONDO AND HOME REMODELING SPECIALIST LOCATED ON LONGBOAT KEY!



941-925-3723 Transforming your home, one room at a time — bringing your vision to life on Longboat Key.

Longboat Key Showroom

By Appointment Only

5610 Gulf of Mexico Drive | Longboat Key, FL 34228

State Certified General Contractor CG-C-1531837

Serving Longboat Key, Lido Key, Bird Key and St. Armands

CKB has a team comprised of general contractors, designers, expert carpenters, project management and more. We will bring your vision to life from first conversation to job completion.

Full Condo & Home Remodeling

Custom & Semi-Custom Cabinetry | Custom Tile Work

Hardwood & LVP Floors | Solid Core Doors

Baseboards & Ceiling Molding/Trim



www.CreativeKitchenAndBaths.com

Red Tide, Killer Cold and Vanishing Grass: The Science Behind Saving Florida's Signature Catch

You can't order it off any menu in Florida. That law is exactly why the 22,000 lab-raised snook slipping into local waters this summer carry the weight of a multibillion-dollar fishery.

There is a particular kind of evening that belongs to this coast. A blackened snook fillet on the table at a Gulf-side restaurant, the light going pink over the water, and somebody at the table still rattled from the fish that nearly spooled them an hour before. It is one of the quiet luxuries that make Longboat Key and Sarasota what they are — not only the dining, but the catching, the line tearing off the reel as a big linesider bolts back under a dock piling.

Here is the part most visitors never learn: you cannot buy that fillet. Not anywhere. Florida declared snook a gamefish in 1957, ending all legal commercial fishing — no market, no menu, no exceptions, save one. A restaurant may keep a snook only to cook it for the recreational angler who legally caught it, and only if it arrives tagged with that person's name and address. Every snook anyone eats on this island was fought, landed and carried to the dock by a person holding a rod. The entire economy of snook — every dollar it moves — runs through recreational fishing.

That is precisely why what Mote Marine Laboratory is doing this summer matters more than a routine fish release.

A fish with no price tag — and an outsized footprint

Because snook never reaches a commercial dock, its economic value is easy to underestimate and hard to overstate. Statewide, the numbers are enormous: the American Sportfishing Association estimates recreational fishing contributes roughly \$13.9 billion in economic impact in Florida each year, and the state counts about 4 million anglers. Snook sits near the top of the inshore wish list driving that spending — guide charters, tackle, fuel, boats, hotel rooms, restaurant tables.

Mote puts a finer point on it. In a recent state funding request, the lab estimated that angling tourism in the regions hit hardest by fish kills and habitat loss supports more than 30,000 jobs and about \$2.4 billion in value-added economic impact. An older regional assessment framed it bluntly: on Florida's west coast, snook, tarpon and redfish together are worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Lose the fish and you do not just lose a weekend hobby. You lose working waterfronts.

What Mote is doing this summer

Across this summer, Mote scientists will release roughly 22,000 juvenile snook into strategic estuarine habitats around Southwest Florida — tidal creeks, mangrove-lined shorelines and sheltered coves chosen for the food, cover and structure that young snook need to survive. The fish were raised at Mote Aquaculture Research Park, the inland facility where researchers also work on the broader puzzle of farming marine fish sustainably.

It is not a new effort. For nearly three decades, Mote has been developing and refining responsible stock-enhancement methods for snook and other native sportfish. "These releases reflect the continued growth and refinement of Mote's fisheries enhancement capabilities," said Dr. Ryan Schloesser, who manages the lab's Fisheries Ecology and Enhancement Program. "Our focus remains on producing healthy fish, releasing them strategically, and collecting the scientific data needed to better understand how stock enhancement can support resilient wild populations."

The science is the point. Before release, the fish undergo health assessments, and the program is built around hard questions: How many survive? Where do they go? Do hatchery fish actually add to wild numbers, or simply replace them?

The genetics breakthrough

The most interesting work is happening at the molecular level. Rather than relying only on physical tags, Mote is building a genetic catalog of its broodstock — the parent fish — so that any young snook recovered later in the wild can be traced back to its origin from nothing more than a small fin clip.

"We have the genetic profiles of the parents and are developing the tools needed to match offspring recovered in the wild back to their source," Schloesser said. "This approach will allow us to evaluate stocking success while minimizing handling and stress associated with traditional tagging methods." In plain terms: a paternity test for fish, one that lets scientists measure whether the releases are working without stressing the animals they are trying to help.

Threat one: the cold that can erase a decade

Snook are a subtropical species living near the cold edge of their range, and they face a punishing set of pressures — each of which this region has felt directly. The first is temperature. Snook are highly sensitive to cold; the first sign of stress is that they stop feeding, followed by loss of equilibrium and death. Trouble begins when water drops below about 50 degrees. The cautionary tale is 2010, when thousands of snook died in a severe freeze and the state took the unusual step of closing the snook season for three years on the west coast.

Recent winters have renewed the worry. Winter Storm Enzo brought record cold and fish kills to the coast in January 2025, and a prolonged cold event in early 2026 again left anglers reporting dead and cold-stunned snook, with some fearing the worst since 2010. The reality proved gentler. An FWC snook researcher reported only minor die-offs this time — "small kills, but nothing like what we expected" — in part because snook have expanded northward and shown surprising resilience. It is exactly that kind of regional cold-stun event that has pushed Mote to expand its monitoring and rapid-response work into neighboring counties and waterways.

Threat two: the blooms that close the water

The second threat is red tide. The 2017–2019 bloom was severe enough that the FWC made snook, redfish and spotted seatrout catch-and-release only from Pasco County through Collier County — a restriction that held in the Sarasota Bay area into 2022. The economic damage rippled well beyond the fish: the 2018 bloom shut down fishing guides for roughly six months and triggered hotel and restaurant cancellations. *Karenia brevis* blooms recur along this coast nearly every year, and low-level cells were detected in Sarasota County waters as recently as this spring.

Threat three: the grass that nearly disappeared

The third, and quietest, threat is habitat. Seagrass is the nursery and pantry of the inshore system — and around here it nearly collapsed. Sarasota Bay's seagrass fell from a peak of 13,473 acres in 2016 to 9,962 acres in 2022, a loss of more than a quarter of its meadows in six years. Tampa Bay lost close to 30 percent over a similar span, and Charlotte Harbor declined 23 percent between 2018 and 2021, driven by nutrient pollution, wastewater problems and red tide.

The recent news is genuinely better. By 2024, Sarasota Bay had rebounded to 11,876 acres, a 19 percent gain over 2022, though still about 12 percent below the 2016 peak. Scientists credit improving water quality, and note the bay weathered the brutal 2024 hurricane season without the collapse seen in milder years past. Still, the director of the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program cautioned that there is "a long way to go before we can say the bay is fully healthy." When the grass goes, the fish factory goes with it.

Recovered, but not safe

The encouraging headline is that snook, the species, is not on the brink. The FWC reports snook stocks have rebounded and now exceed the agency's management goal of 40 percent spawning potential on both the Gulf and Atlantic coasts, a turnaround from 1985, when the fish was considered severely depleted. Careful regulation — the slot limits, the closed seasons, the no-sale rule — worked.

But "recovered" and "safe" are different words. A single hard freeze, a bad bloom or a decade of creeping habitat loss can undo years of gains, as 2010 proved. That is the gap Mote's program is built to fill: not to replace the wild fishery, but to give it a buffer and, just as important, the data to manage it intelligently.

What it means for Longboat and Sarasota anglers

For readers who fish the passes, the bridges and the mangrove edges of Sarasota Bay and the Longboat Key Intracoastal, the rules remain strict and the math simple. In our region the slot is 28 to 33 inches, the limit is one fish per angler per day, and a snook permit is required on top of a saltwater license. Season dates shift by region and year, so it is worth checking MyFWC.com/Snook before keeping one.

And the restoration story is not only Mote's. Just up the coast in Manatee County, a former farm became Robinson Preserve, where about \$17 million transformed 700 acres into mangrove and wetland nursery habitat that now draws roughly 240,000 visitors a year and generates millions in economic activity. It is proof that the inshore fishery is something a community can rebuild — fish, dollars and all.

Which brings it back to that pink-lit dinner table. The snook on the plate is a luxury you cannot purchase at any price. You can only earn it, on the water, with a rod — and only as long as there are snook out there to catch. This summer, 22,000 of them are getting a head start.



EditorLetters



Longboat Key News and Sarasota City News encourages Letters to the Editor on timely issues. Please email to: letters@lbknews.com or mail to PO Box 8001, Longboat Key, FL 34228. We also print letters sent to Town Hall that address Longboat Key issues. We reserve the right to edit.

Canal Navigation Maintenance Program

To: Longboat Town Commission

My wife and I reside in the Fairway Bay community of Bay Isles and are fortunate to have a unit overlooking the Bay across a small canal. We have read with interest the proposal for Special Assessments and appreciate, given our location, why we should contribute to the cost of maintenance.

At the same time, however, we do not think it's fair for those of us with a view of the canal to bear a disproportionate expense anymore then it would be fair asking those with a view of the Gulf to pay a disproportionate share of the cost of maintenance and repairs to the beaches. I'm not aware if this is the case, but the parallel is important.

Regardless of how the total cost is allocated among property owners, we believe anyone using the Bay (whether they live nearby or not) and the canals should also be asked to contribute - perhaps by way of a user fee for anyone with a vessel which has access to and may use the canal waterways.

While we may have missed it, neither of us recall in the materials we have seen to date the idea of a contribution from those who actually use the canals in addition to those, like us, who just happen to own properties abutting the canals. Just adding our voice to the discussion.

Andy Forstenzer
Longboat Key

GAO Study Request

To: Florida State Senate

Per our conversations on aviation issues earlier in the FL Legislative session, I wanted to make sure you were in the loop on the FAA GAO study request we have now finalized.

As you can see from the distribution list, this effort includes many members of the FLC, some of whom are also members with me of the NLC Transportation and Infrastructure Services Committee which is chaired by Josh Simmons from Coral Springs.

As this is a Congressional initiative, I am copying Allison and Commissioner Bishop on this message. Please let me know if you have any questions, or if I can provide any additional information to you.

Allan Kaulbach
Councilor
City of Atlantis

GAO Study Request

To: Florida State Senate

Many thanks to those of you who provided both comments on the first draft of the GAO study request and specific case study/issues relevant to your respective communities.

My thanks to Clint Harper, the Aviation Consultant to the City of Atlantis, for his efforts in developing the original draft and incorporating the comments received. In working with Clint and the City's Aviation Counsel, I am forwarding the attached document for your review. Please advise whether you have any additional edits.

Please get back to me with your comments by no later than next Wednesday, June 10th, so that we can move forward with the request.

We are working with Senator Moody's office to advance this request, but it would be great if we can get other Senate and House members to support this effort. Please let advise whether you would be willing to reach out to other members to ask for their support. If you have any questions or want additional information, please reach out to me.

Allan Kaulbach
Councilor
City of Atlantis

Longboat Pass Bridge

To: Longboat Key Commission

Commissioner Branham, Isaac, and I met with FDOT District Secretary Jamie Driggers and members of his office on Tuesday, June 9th. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Long Pass Bridge replacement plus some additional Gulf of Mexico Drive projects. The attached letter is a summary of the discussion and reiteration of the Town's position.

See Letters, page 6

A Generous & Joyful Community

Growing in Jesus' Name

Dr. Julia Wharff Piermont, Pastor
Join Us For Worship!
Sunday, 10:00 AM

Watch live or livestream:
www.christchurchoflbk.org (follow YouTube link)

CHRIST CHURCH OF LONGBOAT KEY PRESBYTERIAN (U.S.A.)

6400 Gulf of Mexico Dr. • 941.383.8833 • www.christchurchoflbk.org

BREAKFAST • BRUNCH • LUNCH • DINNER • CATERING • GOURMET DELI & BAKERY • CORNER STORE

HARRY'S
Continental Kitchens
EST. 1979
LONGBOAT KEY

WEEKLY SPECIALS
BEST BRUNCH ON LONGBOAT KEY
20% OFF BOTTLES OF WINE DAILY
RESTAURANT & DELI
HAPPY HOUR 3-6
NIGHTLY DINNER SPECIALS

525 ST. JUDES DRIVE • LONGBOAT KEY, FL 34228 • HARRYSKITCHEN.COM • (941) 383-0777

THE LAZY LOBSTER
LONGBOAT KEY

Your Table for Sarasota's Most Delicious Two Weeks

Savor SARASOTA RESTAURANT WEEK
JUNE 1-14, 2026

\$45 | THREE COURSES
June 1st - 14th | Monday - Saturday | 4:00 - 8:30

Enjoy a specially curated three-course dinner featuring fresh seafood favorites, seasonal flavors, and chef-inspired creations – all for just \$45 per person.

Optional 5 oz Wine Pairing with Each Course - \$20

Reservations Recommended!
Book Online at LazyLobsterofLongboat.com
or call 941 383 0440

5350 Gulf of Mexico Dr. | Longboat Key

Let us 'Bringle' the Showroom to You
CALL BRINGLES BLINDS TODAY

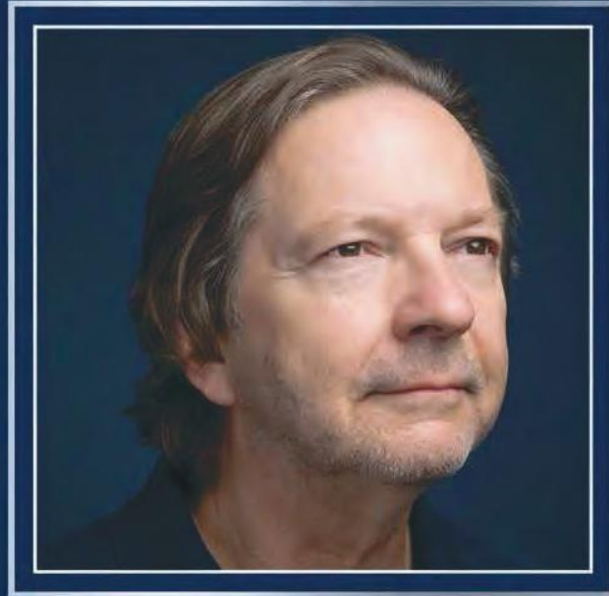
SALE! \$500 OFF all Custom Interior Shutters & Shades

Longboat residents and business owners Chris & Dana Bringle

Bringles Blinds provides affordable blinds, shutters, shades, and master installation services to the Longboat Key, Sarasota, Bradenton, Lakewood Ranch and surrounding areas.

CALL FOR A FREE QOUTE — 941-320-7019
BRINGLEBLINDS.LBK@GMAIL.COM
BRINGLESBLINDS.COM
*Offer valid with minimum purchase of three

MAXIMIZE YOUR REFUND. PRESERVE YOUR WEALTH. BOB PARRISH: YOUR TRUSTED LOCAL TAX FIGHTER



As a resident or investor in the Longboat Key area, your financial portfolio requires meticulous oversight. Don't pay more than you should. Bob Parrish provides the elite expertise and dedicated advocacy necessary to secure your financial health.



Whether you are managing complex assets or seeking to recover capital, put Bob's warrior spirit to work for you. He offers discreet, expert tax services designed to protect your hard-earned wealth:

- *Meticulously Prepared Original Returns*
- *Professional Second Opinions*
- *Strategic Amendments*

OVERCOMING THE ODDS, FIGHTING FOR YOUR FINANCES

True wealth management requires a relentless advocate. After four years of battling an aggressive, stage four, inoperable cancer diagnosis where traditional options were limited, Bob Parrish is in full remission and stronger than ever. He applies this exact same fighting spirit and tenacity to defending your financial interests. Backed by profound empathy and an understanding of what it takes to overcome steep odds, Bob is the trusted advocate you want in your corner.

Secure your financial future today.

CONTACT BOB PARRISH TODAY:

* Address: 12 Date Avenue | Bradenton, FL *

 Voice or Text: 941-302-2926 *  Email: BobParrishlbk@gmail.com

Editor Letters



Letters, from page 4

The meeting was held in two places. The first location was in Coquina Beach looking at the bridge from the ground. This location was chosen (thank you Commissioner Karon for the suggestion) to help provide the best perspective on the proposed height of the fixed span bridge. Town I.T. Director, Jason Keen, flew a drone up to around 80 feet (you have to look closely for it) to create an excellent visual of the height from the ground. He also took pictures with the drone to show the perspective from the top. The pictures are attached and we believe make the best case possible for our position. We then moved to Town Hall to complete our meeting.

Commissioner Branham will discuss the meeting in further detail under Commission comments on June 22nd.

Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program update

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission

On behalf of the SBEP, I wanted to thank you all for participating in the Midnight Pass Workshop. The event included 60 attendees, 20 speakers, and participation from 14 distinct organizations/entities. We greatly appreciate the engagement and your commitment to developing a scientific community around this complex system. The SBEP is committed to long-term engagement with you all on this, and we look forward to what we can do together to bring the ongoing science to our broader community.

Over the next few weeks, we will continue to send updates on additional products from this meeting. In the interim, we have placed the agenda, PDF versions of the presentations, some pictures from the sessions, and a contact list from the meeting on a google drive here . We

hope this will facilitate additional communication and collaborations. In the coming weeks we will have a full video from the meeting available along with a transcribed discussion, data gaps sections, and next steps. We look forward to continued engagement on this important topic, and once again thank you for your participation and engagement.

Ryan Gandy
Executive Director
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Midnight Pass Science Workshop

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin

Thank you, and much appreciated. I just sent some resources from the meeting to the attendees, and we will be sending more in the upcoming weeks. We are looking forward to continued engagement on Midnight Pass.

Ryan Gandy
Executive Director
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Midnight Pass Science Workshop

To: Ryan Gandy

What a fabulous program that the SBEP hosted last week. I know there's tremendous interest around this pass, and folks eager to hear the results that you shared. Again, thanks to you and your staff for another informative and well managed event.

Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Longboat Key

See Letters, page 7



SECUR-ALL INSURANCE AGENCY

Sandra Smith | 941.383.3388

VISIT US ACROSS FROM TOWN HALL! 510 BAY ISLES ROAD SUITE 1, LONGBOAT KEY, FL 34228

CHUBB, AIG, UNIVERSAL, UNITED, SAFECO, PROGRESSIVE, FRONTLINE, VAULT, FLOOD, WE HAVE YOU COVERED!



MEMBERSHIP — *A toast to the good life.*



LONGBOAT • KEY • CLUB



Explore several tiers of membership, providing access to exclusive amenities.
Contact membership@longboatkeyclub.com or (941)387-1661.

[Learn More](#)

Editor Letters



Letters, from page 6

Town Appropriations

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
 Below is a memo of Delegate Robinson's appropriations. We do not appear to have anything on the list.
 BJ Bishop
 Commissioner
 Town of Longboat Key

Town Appropriations

To: Longboat Key Commission
 The 2026-27 Florida budget has been sent to the Governor's office. The budget totals \$114.5 billion but it is less than last year's budget [and will be lower after the Governor exercises his line-item veto power. I was able to secure a record number of projects in the budget - \$36.4 million for our area for Manatee County, the Manatee School District and all 5 cities in the District. Those projects are important infrastructure and water quality projects and include:

- \$7.5 million - SFC for SCF's Parrish Collegiate School.
- \$3.0 million to City of Bradenton's Reclamation Facility.
- \$3.0 million to Manatee County to extend 51st Street West.
- \$2.5 million to BayCare Hospital for its Manatee Neonatal Care Unit
- \$2.5 million to Pace Center for Girls Manatee building.
- \$2.0 million to City of Palmetto Water Meter Backflow Upgrades.
- \$2.0 million to City of Palmetto 10th Avenue improvements.
- \$1.6 million to Manatee County for Veterans Resource Hub and Memorial Park
- \$1.5 million to City of Palmetto for the 14th Avenue Recreational Facility.
- \$1.25 million to City of Anna Maria Public Works building destroyed during the hurricanes.
- \$1 million to City of Bradenton to provide extra wastewater improvements.
- \$1 million to City of Palmetto to repair aging sewer pipes.
- \$2 million to the City of Bradenton to enhance sanitary sewer by replacing lift station 8 and other storage and treatment projects.
- \$1 million to the City of Bradenton Beach to Stormwater Flood and Resiliency Projects.
- \$750K to City of Palmetto for Resiliency Improvements.
- \$750K to Manatee Habitat for infrastructure improvements for its 20-home affordable project.
- \$750K to the Coastal Conservation Association for fishery and water quality.
- \$631K to Holmes Beach for Resiliency and Stormwater improvements along SR 64 and SR 789.
- \$500K to Centerstone for Inpatient Behavioral Facility.
- \$500K to City of Bradenton for Police Dispatch.
- \$400K to Manatee County for the Ft. Hamer Interchange.

22. \$395K to Preschool Emergency Alert Response Learning System.
 23. \$275K to Align Benefit Corp for its growing OAKS initiative - aims to help prevent children from entering Florida's foster care system by supporting families in crisis so they can stay together.
 24. \$275K to Manatee School District for a Soaring Lab in North Manatee.
 25. \$380K to City of Palmetto for Police Dispatch Software.
 All these projects are subject to the veto rights of the Governor. So, if any of these projects are important to you, please let the Governor know.
 The picture was taken right after my farewell address on the House Floor which was taken in March [thanks, mom!]. My term doesn't end until November and so I don't stop working until then!
 Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns!
 William Robinson
 Florida House Representative

Sign on public beach

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin
 I don't see any pictures if they were attached. Can you forward them to me, please?
 Howard N. Tipton
 Town Manager
 Town of Longboat Key

Sign on public beach

To: Lynn Cook
 Thank you Lynn for including me in the information stream. I will ask if these issues be dealt with swiftly.
 Gary Coffin
 Commissioner
 Town of Longboat Key

Sign on public beach

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin
 Gary, I am sending you this picture of the sign. I saw while patrolling my turtle zone yesterday since you are the commissioner of district one and would surely want to be aware of it.
 I also sent it to the coding officer because I had some beach furniture of violations and lighting violations in the turtle zone as well.
 What we do know is that if the referendum passes our ad valorem revenue will be down and our budget will be impacted (obviously), but we don't know exactly how much. As I
See Letters, page 8

RINGSIDE
 EAT. DRINK. SAVOR

Sarasota's Newest Dining Spectacle - Now Open!
 A fresh, inventive dining destination just a short stroll from St. Armands Circle, Ringside balances bold flavors and Gulf seafood favorites in the mesmerizing setting of Cirque St. Armands Beachside.

opalcollection.com/cirque-st-armands 941.388.5555

DRIFT
 KITCHEN & BAR

Top-Ranked for a Reason
 Perched on the eighth floor of Lido Beach Resort, Drift ranks #1 among 900 Sarasota restaurants on TripAdvisor for its unrivaled views and unforgettable flavors.

opalcollection.com/lido-beach 941.388.2161

EditorLetters



Letters, from page 7

mentioned when we spoke, Longboat Key will be in relatively better shape than some other communities, as our mean property valuation is well above the \$250 homestead exemption threshold, and the percentage of homesteaded properties is low (guestimate is around 35%).

Lynn Cook
Longboat Key

Thanks for picking up

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Debra Williams
Thank you! Glad I asked. So ya'll don't know what sort of impact this will have, not yet anyway.

John Dunbar
Suncoast Searchlight

Thanks for picking up

To: John Dunbar
To clarify, the most recently adopted budget 2025-2026, has ad valorem revenue at ~\$18.5 million, with total general fund revenues of ~\$24 million (ad valorem being ~75% of that total). Hope this answers your question.

Debra Williams
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Thanks for picking up

To: Longboat Key Mayor Debra Williams
Hello Mayor, just checking a number, I think I am missing something. The general fund budget is about \$24 million, right? And the new tax amendment would take away 75% of that? That seems crazy.

John Dunbar
Suncoast Searchlight

Thanks for picking up

I'm also sorry I missed your earlier call as well. I can call at 4:15 but if you would like to talk sooner, that's fine too.

John Dunbar
Suncoast Searchlight

Thanks for picking up

To: Longboat Key Mayor Debra Williams
Just send you an email to follow up. Here's my last story on the property tax amendment: <https://suncoastsearchlight.org/desantis-suncoast-property-tax-proposal-sarasota-manatee-desoto/>

As mentioned, I am John Dunbar and I am a reporter for Suncoast Searchlight (go here: www.suncoastsearchlight.org). We are a relatively new news publication based in Sarasota. We are small but influential; most of our reporting gets picked up at one place or another. Anyway, I am doing a follow-up story on the property tax bill that passed last week, and I would like to chat with you.

When I last heard from the town commission, it was a June 1 meeting, and part of the dis-

cussion was about the proposed property tax amendment. I sensed some frustration. That was when you had very little information. How do you feel about it now? What kind of impact might it have on your town?

Does it go too far? Are you concerned you may have to raise taxes or cut services? Which services do you think would be the most vulnerable?

Does this create a rift between the local governments and Tallahassee? Does this fly in the face of home rule? I would love to chat with you, I do have to get this done by this afternoon, or try to anyway! Okay, that's all, thank you.

John Dunbar
Suncoast Searchlight

The Stop Sign

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps

I received the attached email regarding a "stop" sign on the groin by Islander Club. It is believed to have been placed there by the town. If so, is there some way to make it more aesthetically pleasing while delivering the same message?

Debra Williams
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

The Stop Sign

To: Longboat Key Mayor Debra Williams

Mayor, we will look into this. The groin is a Town owned structure, and we did our best to prevent residents and visitors from exploring the damaged structure. It is part of the FEMA claim and as soon as we can get the FEMA process complete, we will get a contractor to permanently repair it. We are hoping sooner than later. I will get with the team to see if there are other options that will continue to secure the site, while being more aesthetically pleasing.

Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key

The Stop Sign

To: Longboat Key Mayor Debra Williams

It was a pleasure to meet you Friday night at Temple Beth Israel. I'm so impressed with your "journey" to the office of Mayor and especially impressed with the responsiveness of our town of Longboat Key. I'm attaching photos of the sign that I mentioned. This is located at approximately 2300 Gulf of Mexico adjacent to The Islander Club property. The groin was partially destroyed during the hurricane and the sign and fence were erected to prevent people from entering. (Oddly enough, I'm watching 4 men fishing from the far edge of the groin as I write this). I realize the importance of caution and safety to the public. Just asking for a more "pleasing sign" until the repairs are finally made. Thank you so much for your attention.

Judy Soden
Longboat Key

Chief Russ Mager - Coordinated Psychological Torture

To: Longboat Key Mayor Debra Williams

This matter was professionally handled by the Longboat Key Police Department. The matters Ms. Rippo brought forward were related to NJ, for which the Town does not have authority. After investigation, Town PD did not find probable cause to proceed further under Florida state law for the matters she was presenting. Ms. Rippo was referred to the state attorney's office.

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Chief Russ Mager - Coordinated Psychological Torture

To: Longboat Key Mayor Debra Williams

Your Chief was screaming at me and I am being told the AG refused these charges. According to Ivan, this matter was supposed to be handled by Detective Ramsaier. Capt. Robert Borque and Chief Russ Mager aren't being honest. I want an internal affairs investigation done on this matter. Please advise who will be doing that investigation. This matter was not handled by the AG Office. I note no name of person from AG Office mentioned in police report that I requested. The only AG connection is Captain Robert Borque who was nominated for an AG Award.

You've just implicated yourself in a very serious matter which includes a coverup of AI Porn by Political Harassers in cape May County. I also note Chief Russ Mager and Captain Borque refused to meet with me on June 6, 2026.

Lisa J. Rippo
Longboat Key

Wood Bridge over Creek and Bridge Designation

To: George Reenstra

I have one estimate on the bridge that was little bit broader in scope than we expected, but it will be good for us to use for comparison. I am waiting for the contractor to refine that and then give me additional pieces that were missing. I am expecting that from the contractor by the end of today. As long as I get what I am expecting, I plan to send you the information by the end of the day. Then we can discuss when you would like.

As far as the Gulf of Mexico Drive (SR 789) dedication within the Town of Longboat Key, here is what I know so far:

It is currently not dedicated, but roads can have more than one dedication anyway.

For the road, it would be a similar process as the bridge, except the road doesn't need a formal Resolution from two separate cities...only from the Town Commission.

As far as a project sponsor or champion, you would probably need a Town Commissioner to champion it so that his or her colleagues can get on board with it as well and then have the

Place Your Bets!
ONE EYED JACKS POKER ROOM

70 TVS - SIMULCASTING
Watch and wager on thoroughbred & greyhound tracks from across the country
DAILY & MONTHLY TOURNAMENTS
HIGH HAND PAYOUT SPECIALS

Poker
LIVE ACTION CASH GAMES
TEXAS HOLD 'EM
7 CARD STUD - OMAHA
VEGAS STYLE GAMES
ULTIMATE TEXAS HOLD 'EM
WILD STUD 3-CARD
FACE UP PAI-GOW

DINING AVAILABLE - ENTREES, HANDHELDS, PIZZAS, SALADS
4404 BEE RIDGE RD SARASOTA, FL 34233
SUNDAY: NOON - MIDNIGHT
MON-SAT: 10:00AM - 2:00AM
WWW.SKCPKER.COM
941-355-7744 EXT 1001

KeyRealEstate

Bird Key, Lido Key, Longboat Key latest sales

Address	Sq. Ft.	List Price	Bed/Bath/Half Bath	Days On Market	Sale Price
801 LONGBOAT CLUB	6,934	\$14,500,000	5 5 1	0	\$14,500,000
569 ROUNDTREE DR	2,756	\$2,890,000	3 3 1	208	\$2,890,000
573 SPINNAKER LN	3,926	\$2,995,000	4 5 0	174	\$2,700,000
545 SANCTUARY DR Unit#B806	2,375	\$2,095,000	3 2 1	555	\$1,950,000
6810 LONGBOAT DR S	2,848	\$2,250,000	4 4 1	191	\$1,850,000
775 LONGBOAT CLUB RD Unit#203	2,122	\$1,750,000	3 3 0	215	\$1,650,000
2550 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#324	3,083	\$1,595,000	3 3 0	118	\$1,495,000
3808 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#E112	2,273	\$1,095,000	3 3 0	0	\$1,095,000
1115 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#304	1,503	\$899,000	2 2 0	8	\$850,000
815 BAYPORT WAY Unit#815	1,601	\$850,000	2 2 0	40	\$750,000
4621 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#14F	900	\$710,000	2 2 0	114	\$700,000
825 BAYPORT WAY Unit#825	1,601	\$699,000	2 2 0	80	\$645,000
4835 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#105	1,393	\$675,000	2 2 0	81	\$625,000
5055 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#331	1,484	\$895,000	2 2 0	185	\$550,000
1975 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#G4-308	1,068	\$449,000	2 2 0	242	\$449,000
3804 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#B305	1,007	\$420,000	2 2 0	30	\$419,741
527 SUTTON PL	1,088	\$349,000	2 1 1	108	\$325,000
3806 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#C312	1,062	\$320,000	2 2 0	6	\$302,000
424 BOWDOIN CIR	5,882	\$14,750,000	5 5 1	378	\$13,375,000
617 N OWL DR	4,382	\$5,150,000	4 3 1	31	\$5,100,000
1300 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN DR Unit#501	4,194	\$4,850,000	3 3 1	28	\$4,750,000
1300 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN DR Unit#701	4,196	\$4,998,000	3 3 1	6	\$4,708,000
325 GOLDEN GATE PT Unit#601	2,557	\$3,160,000	3 3 1	0	\$3,160,000
409 N WASHINGTON DR	1,682	\$1,690,000	2 2 0	6	\$1,631,000
111 S PINEAPPLE AVE Unit#1021	1,575	\$1,299,000	2 2 1	22	\$1,250,000
617 MADISON CT	1,480	\$1,099,000	3 2 0	35	\$1,066,030
750 N TAMiami TRL Unit#1011	1,420	\$900,000	2 2 0	0	\$900,000
660 GOLDEN GATE PT Unit#32	1,359	\$699,000	2 2 0	317	\$600,000
115 TYLER DR Unit#203	766	\$360,000	1 1 0	549	\$350,000

Letters, from page 8

commission pass a Resolution. The Town Manager's office (myself and Mr. Tipton) can help with anything related to the Florida Department of Transportation ("FDOT") and also have a conversation with the state legislators to see whom like to be the lead sponsor for it after a Town Resolution is passed (probably State Rep. Fiona McFarland, but it can be any legislative member).

Memorial designations are considered and passed once a year and signed into law by the Governor; I have a note in to FDOT to find out when this normally happens each year. Once signed into law, FDOT places memorial marker.

Longboat Key has a good history of honoring veterans over time. The discussion the Town Commission may have is whether to have the designation specific for Vietnam War Helicopter Pilots and Crew, as requested, or whether to broaden it for Veterans in general. That would be for the Town Commission to talk through; we as the Town staff and the commissioner sponsor/champion would be clear that the specific request you have made is to Honor Vietnam War Helicopter Pilots and Crew.

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Wood Bridge over Creek and Bridge Designation

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman

I am here all week before heading back to Europe. Progress on the path/bridge? Further update on. GOM dedication? Wait to hear.

George Reenstra
Longboat Key

Wood Bridge over Creek and Bridge Designation

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman

Great, I. Am heading to Europe but will stay I touch....thank you.

George Reenstra
Longboat Key

Wood Bridge over Creek and Bridge Designation

To: George Reenstra

Thank you Sir, that sounds good! No, I don't think Gulf of Mexico Drive has a designation yet either; I can check on that. As far as a Representative, let me check with Mr. Tipton, Town Manager, and get his thoughts.

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Wood Bridge over Creek and Bridge Designation

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman

Thanks for your thoughtful comments. Since I rarely go north the new pass bridge is my choice. I doubt either town would object. This is above my pay grade. Does Gulf of Mexico have such a designation? Sounds easier and would work for me. Can you recommend someone

I can meet with and retain to act as my Representative? Thanks, when I get back, you, Gary and myself can grab lunch.

George Reenstra
Longboat Key

Wood Bridge over Creek and Bridge Designation

To: George Reenstra

Thank you for reaching out! I met with our Public Works Department onsite, and they have started the work to clean up all the ditch banks and the ditch itself. We also just met with our contractor last week about the wood bridge over the creek project. He is working up some numbers for that. As soon as we get that, we will forward your way.

As far as a memorial opportunity for the south bridge (New Pass Bridge) in Honor with Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and Crews, I did some research, and it is a little bit involved. Memorials on state roads or bridges are defined by Florida Statute. Below is my understanding of the statute:

Starts with a Formal Recommendation(s) from the local government showing support for the memorial designation. If the bridge or road is in more than one locality, it would require formal recommendations from both cities. In this case, the Town of Longboat Key and the City of Sarasota since the bridge connects the two cities.

Once Formal Recommendations are achieved, there would need to be a State Legislative sponsor (FL House or Senate).

That sponsor would then make sure to get actual formal Resolutions from both the Town and the City. Once the Resolutions are passed and obtained, the sponsor brings it to the State Legislature and the State Legislature votes on it. Once approved, the Florida Department of Transportation ("FDOT") designates the bridge with a memorial marker.

So, it all starts at the local Town level with a recommendation from the Town Commission. Then, if the Town Commission supported it, that recommendation would go to the City of Sarasota to see if their elected officials support it.

Another potential option is a memorial as part of the new Broadway Street at Gulf of Mexico Drive Roundabout that the state is helping us build at the north end. I am not sure, but it may have to go through the same process because Gulf of Mexico Drive is a state road (SR 789). The upside is that it is more of a Town requested project rather than an existing bridge between two cities. But we understand that a bridge designation is strong and very meaningful.

Another idea is that the Town has historical markers in Town right-of-way or property like the one below. These are usually tied to some historical event in connection with Longboat Key, but maybe there is a connection that can be considered.

These are just some initial thoughts and research. As far as the wood bridge over the creek is concerned, I will send the construction estimate once we have it in hand.

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Ads that work...

ads@Lbknews.com or 941.387.2200

OnPatrol



The following are actual police reports as written by Longboat Key Police Officers. They are edited for length, punctuation and to protect privacy.

June 5 Party

9:33 p.m.

Officer Castro responded to the 4600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a report of a disturbance at the resort. Upon arrival, Officer Castro spoke with the hotel employee who stated that a guest had reported a man and woman were arguing in one of the rooms. Officer Castro proceeded to the fifth floor and upon approaching the room, heard a woman speaking loudly with a male voice in the background. Officer Castro made contact with the guests who advised that they were not arguing but were upset because they had learned their daughter had invited a group of friends to their residence. They explained that they needed to call the Sheriff's Office in Largo, Florida where they live because the party at their home was out of control. The couple apologized for the disturbance and stated they were leaving the hotel to return home and handle the situation. There was no evidence that the couple was engaged in an argument with each other. Case clear.



not locate her purse. After extensively searching the room with the consent of the woman and looking around the property, Officer Pescuma located the missing purse underneath a suitcase in the corner of the room. Case clear.

June 7 Driving while under the influence

3:30 a.m.

Officer Castro while on patrol on Gulf of Mexico Drive observed a vehicle swerving, nearly leaving the roadway on one occasion. Sgt. Butler conducted the traffic stop and informed Officer Castro that the vehicle's tag lights were not operation which

prompted the stop and that the driver was having difficulty maintaining their lane. Officer Castro approached the passenger side of the vehicle and observed the driver in full control of the vehicle with the keys in the ignition and the engine running. A female passenger was seated in the passenger seat and while speaking to the driver, Officer Castro detected the odor of alcoholic beverages coming from the vehicle. Officer Castro then moved to the driver's side and spoke directly with the driver at close proximity confirming the odor was coming from his breath. The driver's speech was slurred and his eyes appeared watery. The driver admitted to consuming alcoholic beverages saying he drank one 'buzzball' at a party earlier that night, then clarified that he had consumed one or two 'buzzballs.' The driver agreed to perform the field sobriety exercises. Based on the totality of the circumstances, Officer Castro placed the driver under arrest for DUI. The driver was transported to the Sarasota County Jail where he agreed to provide a breath sample which gave a reading of .083 g/210L. Case clear.

June 6 Ducklings

9:25 a.m.

Officer Pescuma while on patrol observed a call for a report of a baby duck that had fallen into a storm drain and was trapped at Publix. Officer Pescuma advised communications that animal services from Sarasota County would not be needed and they could handle the Longboat Police could handle the call. Officer Pescuma arrived on scene within a minute and located the caller in the parking lot. Officer Pescuma also observed the mother duck and ducklings close by to the drain. Officer Pescuma requested an additional unit to assist Officer Pescuma with lifting the storm drain cover. Officer Pescuma arrived on scene and the drain cover was removed where they located three ducklings trapped. Officer Pescuma reached into the storm drain and removed the ducklings without incident. The ducklings reunited with their mother and safely left the area. Case clear.

Trespassing

9:48 a.m.

Officer Miano responded to the 300 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a civil issue. Upon arrival, Officer Miano spoke with the manager via cellphone and he said he received phone calls about work being conducted in one of the units, which is not allowed per the resort policy. Officer Miano advised him they do not enforce their resort policies but Officer Miano would advise the workers of the resort policies. Officer Miano interviewed the crew supervisor and related the resort policy in accordance with work being performed on Saturdays. The supervisor understood and denied knowing the policy, further related they would vacate the unit as soon as possible. Case clear.

Incident

9:57 a.m.

Officer Troyer was dispatched to the 4600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a suspicious incident. The complainant contacted the dispatch center and he reported he was the supervisor for the resort and a customer reported a purse missing. Upon arrival, Officer Troyer met with the complainant of the missing purse. The woman reported sometime after 1p.m. yesterday, her purse went missing. The woman discovered the missing purse approximately one hour prior to the call being dispatched. The woman said she searched everywhere and could

Assist Agency

5:53 p.m.

Sgt. Montfort was dispatched to the 2600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a possible drowning/swimmer in distress offshore. Dispatch advised that a woman ran into the office reporting that someone was offshore and drowning. The incident had begun approximately three minutes prior to the call. Initial information indicated the subject may have been caught in a current; however, it was unknown whether the subject was actively drowning or just swimming. No further description of the subject in the water was available at the time. Officer Troyer launched the police boat and responded. Updates indicated there was one person in the water approximately 100 yards from shore. Marine rescue responded. At approximately 6:01 p.m., the Marine Patrol advised they were with the subject. Sarasota Police Department also made contact with the subject while attempting the rescue. The subject was identified as a 25-year-old woman. The marine unit later advised the patient was fine and remained with rescue personnel. At approximately 6:07 p.m., St. Petersburg Coast Guard later contacted dispatch for an update and was advised of the information available. Case clear.

June 8 Trespassing

5:12 p.m.

Officer Nazareno, Officer Maple, Officer Miklos, Officer Martinson, and Officer Tillman were dispatched to Gulfside Road for a trespassing call. Upon arrival, officer Nazareno met with the property owner who advised that she heard a sound on the second floor balcony sliding door when she entered the first floor to check on her property. The owner brought a black bag containing a beach towel and clothes, saying she found the bag in her patio, placing it in the front yard. Officers checked all rooms on the first and second floor which were all clear. The owner also pointed out that there was a red Toyota Prius parked on the abandoned house next door. Officers observed the red Toyota and ran the tag through FCIC/NCIC. The vehicle was registered to a 17-year-old. As the officers walked back to the property, they observed three teenagers on the property who were 17 years old. The boys said that they thought the house was abandoned and were using the tables on the first-floor patio to place their bags. All three subjects were detained on scene once backup units arrived. The parents were contacted and responded to the scene. Officers recovered at the scene a glass bong, a grinder and 2.9 grams of marijuana from the living room table of the second floor. Officers were unable to determine the ownership of the found property. All items were submitted to evidence for destruction. Case clear.

June 10 Animal

10:33 a.m.

Officer Castro was dispatched to the 3000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to an animal complaint. A concerned citizen contacted Longboat Key Police Department to advise that a group of beachgoers were touching a manatee that was swimming in the area. Upon arrival, Officer Castro observed a group of approximately six people in the water while a manatee was swimming next to them. The individuals were not disrupting the manatee's free movement, and Officer Castro did not observe anyone touching or attempting to touch the animal. However, while advising the community about laws protecting manatees and other species, Officer Mathis observed a man consuming alcoholic beverages. Officer Castro approached the individual who stated he was not aware of town ordinances prohibiting the consumption of alcoholic beverages on the beach. The man was issued a citation for possession of alcoholic beverages on a public beach. Case clear.



**LBK
Liquors**

941.953.1835

The Island's largest selection of Beer, Wine & Spirits
Come check out our competitive prices!

Discounts on cases of wine | Special orders welcome

Locally owned & operated

Whitney Beach Plaza
6854 Gulf of Mexico Drive | Longboat Key, FL

Ads that work...

ads@Lbknews.com or 941.387.2200

Editorial Opinion



Wimbledon, from page 1

write “Alcaraz or Sinner,” you go make a sandwich, and by the time you’re back one of them is kissing a trophy. They’ve split the last nine majors like two only-children carving up the final cookie.

This year the cookie is on the floor, and the dog got it. Both men found inventive new ways to not be anywhere near the conversation, and the French Open trophy ended up in the hands of two gentlemen your aunt could not pick out of a lineup. Allow me to narrate the wreckage.

Carlos Alcaraz and His Award-Winning Remote-Control Arm

Carlos Alcaraz is 23, owns seven majors, and in January completed the career Grand Slam in Australia by beating Novak Djokovic — the tennis equivalent of beating the final boss while your friends are still reading the instructions.

Then, in April, in Barcelona, his right wrist filed for divorce and took the house.

He hasn’t played since. He pulled out of the French Open. Then he pulled out of Wimbledon, which means the most gifted human in the sport will be experiencing the entire grass season as content. By his own account he is home “watching the results” — a sentence so sad it should come with a hotline — which confirms that the most lethal wrist in tennis is now certified for exactly one task: changing the channel.

And here’s the thing nobody will say. Somewhere inside Carlos — a sweetheart, a credit to the game — a tiny pilot light of joy ignites every time he watches his archrival Jannik Sinner also eat it. This is not pettiness. This is love of the sport.

The wrist specialists, meanwhile, have started murmuring the name Juan Martín del Potro — a former champion whose wrist eventually took his career apart like a toddler with a screwdriver and a smoke detector. Sleep tight.

Jannik Sinner: Carved From Marble, Wired Like a Dollar-Store Phone Charger

With Alcaraz on the couch, Jannik Sinner — world No. 1, six straight Masters titles, a 30-match winning streak — was the overwhelming, lock-of-the-century, house-always-wins favorite in Paris. The French was the one major he’d never won. The draw opened in front of him like the Red Sea. The job was: appear, and remain upright.

He lost in the second round. To a man ranked 56th. After leading. After literally serving for the match in the third set.

What happened over the last two sets — which he donated by the cheerful scores of 6–1, 6–1 — is a matter for forensic investigators. Sinner is a glorious athlete who appears constitutionally unable to remain one past the three-set mark, at which point his body begins faxing its resignation. The cramps. The hip. The “medical timeout,” summoned with sniper-like timing, during which a trainer materializes to administer what looks like a full Swedish massage on a court-side cot while the broadcast booth describes the scene in the hushed, devastated tones of men reporting live from a flood.

We will, as gentlemen, decline to revisit the three-month doping ban, except to note that it happened, that the official explanation involved a cream, a spray, and a haunted massage table, and that “trace amounts” remains one of the hardest-working phrases in modern sport.

If Sinner can survive three sets at Wimbledon, he wins Wimbledon. The whole tournament hinges on the fourth.

Novak Djokovic, or: The Legend Is Doing Great, the Man Less So

And Djokovic? Twenty-four majors. The most decorated racquet-slinger in history.

Here’s the cruelty of 2026: the idea of Novak Djokovic is still undefeated. The actual Novak Djokovic lost in the third round of the French Open to a 19-year-old named João Fonseca — a charming Brazilian who possesses, at minimum, a skincare regimen and a robust TikTok following. Djokovic is now ranked seventh, a number so far beneath him he probably needs cheaters to read it.

He remains dangerous the way an aging gunslinger is dangerous: chiefly to people who weren’t there and only heard the legend.

Aryna Sabalenka vs. the Tennis Ball: A Blood Feud

The women’s No. 1 is Aryna Sabalenka, who hits a tennis ball as if it owes her money, insulted her mother, and keyed her car on the way out. When it’s on, it’s the best show in sports. When it’s off, it’s a person trying to kill one fast wasp in a small bathroom with a cast-iron skillet, over-caffeinated, having just read every single reply to her last post.



REID

I honestly thought she’d outgrown the chapter where, somewhere in the second hour, the wheels detach and roll off toward four separate exits. She has not. Last year she stood a single set from the French Open title and then served up — her words — the worst tennis of her recent life. This year she didn’t get that far, going out in the quarterfinals to the 25th seed while, one assumes, the ball hid behind the net post and prayed.

Iga Świątek Is on a Healing Journey, and So, Apparently, Are We All

Then there’s Iga Świątek, who spent the past year on a noble pilgrimage toward inner peace — an effort that has gone roughly as well as most pilgrimages.

After a first-round loss in Miami she fired her coach and confessed that “tennis feels complicated in my head,” a sensation I personally reserve for parallel parking and tax season. She then hired Francisco Roig, Rafael Nadal’s coach of 17 years, flew to Nadal’s academy in Mallorca, and trained with the literal King of Clay standing court-side radiating calm — the working theory being that if you bottle enough Rafa, you can muffle the thunderclap of self-doubt that detonates inside her skull roughly four unforced errors into any given afternoon.

She then lost in the fourth round of the French Open — on clay, her holy ground — by spontaneously combusting in the second set, right on schedule. It was her earliest Paris exit since 2019. Chris Evert called it “back to the drawing board,” which is tennis for we don’t bring it up at dinner.

Meanwhile, a Polish Cinderella Strolled Past Her With a Smile

And here is a twist no screenwriter would dare pitch. While Iga was journaling about her feelings, her countrywoman Maja Chwalińska — a fellow Pole who began the tournament down in qualifying, the tennis equivalent of the airport economy parking lot — strolled through the entire draw and into the French Open final. On her debut. As a qualifier. Only the second qualifier in the modern era to do it.

She lost the final to a 19-year-old, Mirra Andreeva, the youngest French Open champion since 1992 — because obviously, because it’s 2026 and the teenagers have gone fully feral and can smell blood. But a star detonated in the wreckage, the WTA has a glittering new darling, and she arrived, magnificently, straight from the parking lot, dragging her own suitcase.

So Who Wins Wimbledon? My Ironclad, Legally Non-Binding Forecast

Let’s survey the grass. The best player alive is home with a busted wrist and a remote. The second-best misplaces his legs and his will somewhere in set four. The greatest of all time is losing to children with skincare routines. The women’s No. 1 is in open warfare with the ball, the former queen is in talk therapy, and the last two major finals were won by a 29-year-old German who’d choked three finals in a row before finally weeping into the clay — and contested by Italians your barber would need name tags for.

So my prediction for Wimbledon 2026 is this: somebody will win it.

It might be Sinner, provided the match wraps before his hamstrings file for collective bargaining. It might be Zverev, freshly un-cursed and briefly terrifying. It might be a 19-year-old we have not yet been ordered to revere, who will be the unstoppable future of tennis right up until the instant his wrist also detonates.

The only result I can guarantee is the New York Knicks — which I refuse to say out loud, because I am superstitious, and because somewhere a U-Haul idles in the dark and Gary the lawnmower repairman waits patiently as my next and final act.

See you on the courts. Bring sunscreen and impossibly low expectations.

LONGBOAT KEY TENNIS CENTER

Join the fun!

10 OPEN COURTS | TOURNAMENT PLAY | LESSONS

FULL SERVICE TENNIS PRO SHOP

ROUND ROBIN LEAGUE

CERTIFIED INSTRUCTORS AND CLINICS

OPEN MON-FRI 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM

SAT-SUN 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

SEASONAL AND ANNUAL PASSES ENJOY
UNLIMITED FREE PLAY!

590 BAY ISLES ROAD | LONGBOAT KEY, FL
941.316.8367

LYNX POINT
FUNDING

**GET THE FUNDING
YOUR BUSINESS
NEEDS — FAST.**

Equipment financing and business loans
approved in as little as 24 hours.

- Fast Approvals** — Decisions in 24 hours, funding in days
- Business Loans** — Working capital, expansion, cash flow
- Equipment Financing** — Own the tools without draining reserves
- Flexible Terms** — Built around your business
- All Credit Considered** — We look at more than just your credit report
- Small Business Specialists** — Let us help you get to the next level

Don’t let slow financing hold you back.

CALL: 941-420-5472 | VISIT: LP-FUNDING.COM



SCAN TO APPLY

Canals, from page 1

for a canal lot because they like the view of a seawall. They pay for the water, and for what the water lets them do.

But somewhere between the brochure and the boat lift, a good deal of that promise has quietly run aground.

Twenty-three years of silt

Longboat Key's canals have not been dredged since 2003. In the two decades since, runoff, storms and the slow patient work of tide and time have packed the canal bottoms with muck, leaving many of the island's waterways shallow, tide-dependent and, in the worst stretches, simply impassable at low water.

Boaters have learned to read tide charts like scripture. They time departures and homecomings around the water, and more than a few have had the particular experience of motoring out on a high tide only to find themselves stuck outside their own canal hours later, idling in the bay and waiting for the water to come back so they can get home. Others have watched props chew the bottom, replaced lower units, and shortened their boats to match their depth. The dream of spontaneity — jump in the boat and go — has given way to logistics.

The numbers tell the same story. When the town hired coastal engineering firm First Line Coastal to survey and grade all 88 canals, the report card came back ugly. More than half scored below a C. Eighteen canals were graded D. Four were graded F, which in the firm's grading system means not navigable at all.

Now that long, slow decline has reached a reckoning.

The decision before the commission

After more than two decades of study, conversations that began in the 1990s, and what Public Works Director Charlie Mopps has counted as more than thirty commission meetings on the subject since 2013, the Longboat Key Town Commission has reached the decisive stage of a roughly \$9 million program to dredge all 88 canals — and, just as consequentially, of settling the far more contentious question of who pays for it.

In May, the commission gave the funding plan unanimous approval on first reading. Under the town's two-step ordinance process, a single step now stands between the plan and enactment: a second and final reading. If the commission grants that final approval, the first assessments will appear on residents' November 2026 property tax bills. It is the last real hurdle for a program town leaders have spent years trying to push across the finish line.

"We've been kicking this can down the road quite a bit," Mopps told residents at one of a

series of town hall briefings. "It's pretty flat; it's not rolling anymore."

It is, in the town's careful phrasing, "a program, not a project" — a distinction Mopps has repeated almost as a mantra. The point is that the canals would not simply be dredged once and forgotten, as they effectively were in 2003, but maintained on a rolling basis so the island never again wakes up to a 23-year backlog. The dredging itself, residents have been assured, would look nothing like the heavy machinery now chewing sediment out of New Pass; the work in the canals would be quieter, smaller and incremental, moving from one stretch to the next. The plan calls for restoring the canals to a roughly five-foot depth, the permitted baseline.

The first round of dredging is estimated at about \$9 million, and as much as \$9.66 million across the first five years — a figure that has actually fallen sharply over time. An earlier estimate, built on older surveys, ran as high as \$16.8 million before consultants re-scoped the work. The town's share in the 2026-27 fiscal year is pegged at roughly \$1.46 million.

The 80/20 question

The dredging was never really in dispute. The money was, and is.

The funding plan now before the commission is modeled on the same 80/20 framework the town uses to pay for beach renourishment, a structure officials chose in part because residents already understand it. Under the plan, properties with direct canal access carry about 80 percent of the cost, and the rest of the island carries the remaining 20 percent on the theory that navigable, healthy canals benefit everyone.

The mechanics work like this. Canal-facing parcels — those with an existing boat ramp or the potential for one — would pay a flat annual fee of \$620 per "equivalent benefit unit," billed as a non-ad-valorem assessment on the property tax bill. That flat fee does most of the heavy lifting, raising roughly 70 percent of the program's revenue. The balance comes from a modest ad-valorem millage of 0.0623 mills assessed on every property on the island for the first five years — about 10 percent of the total from canal-facing owners and about 20 percent from everyone else.

For a non-waterfront home assessed at \$500,000, that island-wide millage works out to around \$31 a year. Properties without canal access pay no flat fee at all — only that small millage.

Crucially, the plan promises relief on the back end. After the initial five-year restoration push, the program shifts into maintenance mode and the costs are projected to fall by roughly half: the flat fee drops to about \$318, and the millage to 0.032. Whether 80/20 is the right division remains, by commissioners' own admission, a starting point rather than settled doc-

See Canals, page 13

Lido, from page 1

protection. And just to the north, Longboat Key is counting the days until its own turn comes.

A \$400,000 bargain, dredged from the pass

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, cut the ribbon on the finished project on May 29, gathering City of Sarasota and Sarasota County officials, stakeholders and Lido Key residents on the new sand. By the Corps' own accounting, the effort placed about 300,000 cubic yards of sand along nearly 1.2 miles of critically eroded shoreline — and it did so cheaply, because the sand was essentially a byproduct.

Rather than buy and barge in fresh material, the Corps pulled the sand out of New Pass, the inlet that separates Lido Key from Longboat Key, as part of a federally funded navigation-dredging job that was already on the books. Roughly 80 percent of the project's design template was built from beach-quality sand generated directly by that New Pass dredging. One dredge, two missions: a safer navigation channel and a rebuilt beach.

The piggyback approach saved the City of Sarasota an estimated \$400,000 and spared local roads an estimated 150 truckloads of hauled material, according to the Corps. The Corps also coordinated to set aside about 3,000 cubic yards of sand for dune-building work the city plans to undertake.

"This project demonstrates how we can deliver multiple benefits to the public through smart, coordinated infrastructure investment," said Maj. Cory Bell, Deputy Commander for South Florida with the Jacksonville District. "By pairing navigation dredging with beach renourishment, we were able to protect critical shoreline infrastructure, support the local economy, preserve environmental habitat and maximize value for the American taxpayer."

Sarasota Mayor Debbie Trice was less technical and more delighted. "Today, thanks to the Army Corps decision to use the sand removed from their dredging of New Pass to renourish Lido Key Beach, we're gathered on a perfect beach, on a perfect beach day," she said.

From Big Pass to New Pass: a tale of two sand sources

The price tag is what makes this round remarkable, because Lido's last major refill was anything but a bargain.

In 2020 and 2021, the Corps renourished Lido by dredging sand out of Big Sarasota Pass — the contested inlet at Lido's southern end — in a project estimated at roughly \$22.7 million. That effort placed some 683,000 cubic yards across about 1.4 miles of shoreline and added two permeable rock groins near the south end of the island to slow the sand's inevitable march southward.

This time, by riding the New Pass navigation cycle instead of mounting a stand-alone dredging campaign, the city captured a beach for a fraction of the cost. The lesson, increasingly, is that the cheapest sand in Florida is the sand you can grab while a dredge is already running.

The groin in the room

Not everyone on Lido is uncorking champagne. As The Sarasota News Leader has reported, the southernmost of the two groins built during the earlier project has been left uncovered, and the contractor did not spread fresh sand on the stretch of South Lido directly in front of the Sarasota Sands condominium complex.

In an April email obtained by the News Leader, Corps project manager Andy Cummings told the city's engineer that additional sand near the southern groins was "unnecessary at this time," with the expectation that material placed to the north will migrate down and fill the area naturally. Residents have nonetheless questioned both the bare beach and the safety of an exposed structure; the News Leader reported that a person required assistance near the groin on April 11, prompting a Sarasota County Fire Department response that recorded no injuries.

The Corps' position is that an exposed groin is doing exactly what it was built to do. "It is completely normal and consistent with standard coastal engineering design for these structures to be exposed," J.P. Rebello, public affairs officer for the Jacksonville District, told the News Leader. "An exposed groin is still actively performing its intended function." The structures, he added, remain structurally sound whether fully buried or partially showing, and day-to-day beach safety and signage fall to the City of Sarasota as the local sponsor.

Whose sand is it, anyway?

Here is where Longboat Key enters the story — and where some residents start to bristle.

The sand that piles up inside New Pass does not appear by magic. It washes there through longshore drift, the steady north-to-south river of sediment that runs down Florida's Gulf coast. In plain terms, the sand the Corps just spread on Lido drifted into New Pass off the beaches of Longboat Key.

The two communities have a long-standing arrangement to take turns: the City of Sarasota and the Town of Longboat Key alternate dredging New Pass for their respective beaches, much as Manatee County and Longboat alternate on Longboat Pass to the north. This cycle, Lido got the sand. As Longboat Key News has reported, some island residents have begun openly questioning why Longboat keeps handing a share of "its" sand to a neighbor every other dredging cycle.

The grievance is geologic as much as financial. The sand keeps leaving Longboat. The question is how much of it Longboat gets to keep.

Longboat's turn — and the great sand hunt

Under the alternation, the next New Pass dredging cycle should feed Longboat Key. The timing could hardly be more pointed, because Longboat is preparing for the most expensive ongoing job the town performs: a sweeping beach renourishment long described as a 2028 project.

That timeline is now accelerating. Town Manager Howard Tipton has told Longboat Key News the town is aiming to begin groin construction in the fall of 2027 and start the beach renourishment itself in late fall of 2027 — less than two years out. The scope is enormous: roughly 800,000 cubic yards of sand at a cost in the neighborhood of \$32.9 million, paired with a new groin field along Gulfside Road, the chronically erosive stretch just south of the Ohana seawall that public works officials describe as one of the island's hardest problems to solve.

The money is being assembled from several directions — about \$12.2 million from FEMA, roughly \$7 million from the state, about \$5 million from tourist-development taxes, and the remainder from funds left over from the 2021 project. But money is the easy part. The hard part is the sand.

A single New Pass cut yields somewhere in the range of 200,000 to 300,000 cubic yards — useful, but nowhere near the 800,000 cubic yards Longboat needs. So even as the town's place in the New Pass rotation comes back around, Longboat is spending roughly \$340,000 to hunt for offshore borrow areas it can call its own, hoping to identify a sand cache big enough to supply not one project but several.

"Sand is pretty much gold in Florida," Public Works Director Charlie Mopps has told the Town Commission. "Everybody is fighting for the same sand sources." Dredging New Pass and Longboat Pass remains the natural solution, but as the town's coastal engineer, Al Browder, has put it, "there are a lot of hands in that basket." Add the environmental fine print — sand must meet quality and grain standards so it doesn't harm sea turtles and nesting birds — and the search narrows further.

The cost of gold

The scarcity shows up most starkly in the math. Longboat's first island-wide renourishment, back in 1993, placed nearly two million cubic yards at roughly \$5 a cubic yard. The 2028 project pencils out closer to \$41 a cubic yard — eight times the price, for less than half the volume. The 2024 hurricane season alone stripped an estimated 400,000 cubic yards from the island, on top of the 150,000 to 175,000 cubic yards Longboat loses to ordinary erosion every year.

Tipton frames the spending as a bargain in disguise, given the state and federal dollars the beach pulls in. "It's a small price to pay for the beach," he has said. And the cost of sand, he notes, only keeps climbing.

Which brings it back to the powder on Lido. It glitters in the sun, it cushions the storms, it lures the tourists whose dollars keep these islands solvent — and it is quietly worth more, ounce for laundered ounce, than the white powder it resembles. The difference is that beach is legal, the supply is running short, and on this coast everybody wants the same fix.

Lido just got its hit. Longboat is next in line — if it can find the stash.

Canals, from page 12

trine — a reasonable and familiar place to begin the conversation, not the final word.

“Why should we pay?": the fairness fight

That is exactly where the friction lives, and the letters arriving at Town Hall make clear the debate is far from one-sided.

The objection comes in two flavors. The first is the Gulf-side argument: canals are private amenities that lift the value of the homes that front them, the reasoning goes, so why should a beachside condo owner who has never owned a boat help pay to dredge them? As one resident put it, a non-canal homeowner can reach those canals only by boat in the first place.

The more sophisticated critique is not that non-waterfront owners should pay nothing, but that the cost should track the benefit far more precisely than a blunt 80/20 split allows. Residents have pointed to the town's own undergrounding project, where the benefit to each parcel was analyzed in fine detail before costs were assigned, and asked why the canal program settles for a single flat fee instead. If a \$2 million home gains more in value from dredging than a \$1 million home, the argument runs, the two should not pay an identical flat assessment — which is one reason some owners favor a value-based ad-valorem approach over the flat EBU fee.

Andy Forstenzer, who lives in the Fairway Bay community of Bay Isles in a unit overlooking the bay across a small canal, raised a different gap altogether: the people who actually use the canals.

“We do not think it's fair for those of us with a view of the canal to bear a disproportionate expense any more than it would be fair asking those with a view of the Gulf to pay a disproportionate share of the cost of maintenance and repairs to the beaches,” Forstenzer wrote to the commission. He went on to suggest that anyone with a vessel that can access the canals — not only the owners of the lots that happen to abut them — be asked to contribute, perhaps through a user fee. “Neither of us recall in the materials we have seen to date the idea of a contribution from those who actually use the canals,” he wrote. “Just adding our voice to the discussion.”

The mobile-home appeal

The sharpest equity objection has come from the island's least likely waterfront address.

Dan Dexter, a resident of the Gulf Shore mobile home community since 2020, hand-delivered a letter to Town Hall in early June formally appealing any assessment on his property and his neighbors'.

“A mobile home on Longboat Key is an oddity, and does not benefit from canal dredging costs as other properties on the island,” Dexter wrote. He noted that the Gulf Shore and Twin Shores parks are among the only attainable housing left on the island, home to many retirees in a 55-and-over community for whom the property tax bill is already a strain before any new line item is added. He also objected to what he described as an 8 percent collection fee layered on top of the assessment, calling it added “insult and injury.”

“Please consider removing all mobile homes located in Gulfshore and Twin Shores from the proposed subject assessment,” he wrote. “A minor gesture of fairness is in order.”

The appeal lands on a genuine tension in the program's design. The flat EBU fee is keyed to the potential for a boat ramp, not to a household's ability to pay — a feature that makes the assessment simple to administer but blind to the difference between a multimillion-dollar canal estate and a retiree's mobile home on a fixed income.

The case for dredging: floods, FEMA and red tide

If the debate over who pays has been loud, the case for doing the work at all has been notably quiet, because almost no one disputes it.

Not every voice at Town Hall has been a complaint. Writing on behalf of the homeowners of Country Club Shores I and II — one of the island's prime boating neighborhoods — association president James S. LeBaron told the commission his community stands firmly behind the plan.

“Many have lived along these canals for years and have watched water depths diminish, navigability decline, and the overall health of the waterway suffer as a result of accumulated sediment,” LeBaron wrote. “The sentiment I hear consistently is one of gratitude that the Town is taking meaningful action.” Canal access and water quality, he added, “are not abstract concerns for our residents — they are central to the lifestyle and property values that drew them to Longboat Key in the first place.”

Town Manager Howard Tipton has framed the program less as a luxury and more as infrastructure. Deeper canals mean greater stormwater capacity, and on a barrier island that has just absorbed two of the worst storms in its history, anything that moves floodwater off the island faster and out to the Gulf and the Intracoastal is, in his telling, a public-safety priority rather than a boater's perk. There is a financial dimension to that argument as well: by formally maintaining the canals, the town becomes eligible for FEMA reimbursement for storm-related canal debris, closing a loophole that has historically left taxpayers holding the bill.

There is an environmental case, too. The nutrient-rich “bio-loads” sitting on the canal floors feed harmful algae blooms, and removing that sediment is one of the few tools a town actually has to blunt red tide. The program also carries a built-in efficiency: before major dredging can begin, environmental permits require the town to build a three-acre seagrass mitigation area needing some 24,000 cubic yards of fill, and the town intends to supply that fill with clean sand pulled straight from the canals. “It is a win-win project,” Tipton said.

To soften the blow to taxpayers, the town is also pursuing a \$3 million federal appropriation through the Water Resource Development Act of 2026, with the backing of Congressman Vern Buchanan and Representative Greg Steube. Permitting safeguards — turbidity curtains to contain clouded water within the work zone, and a dedicated manatee monitor required aboard every dredging barge — are written into the plan.

What navigable water is worth

For all the talk of fairness, the financial logic underneath the program is the island's real estate market, and that market draws an unusually sharp line between water you can use and water you can only look at.

Longboat Key is one of Florida's most exclusive barrier islands, with 2026 median home prices running roughly \$1.9 million to \$2.5 million depending on neighborhood and water access. To put that in perspective, the median single-family home in neighboring Sarasota sells for around \$490,000 — the island commands a multiple of the mainland precisely because of what surrounds it: more than 25 miles of Gulf and bay frontage and a network of private canals threading the interior.

But not all of that waterfront is created equal, and the gap is widening. Bayfront and bay-view homes generally trade between \$1 million and \$5 million, with deepwater lots that can float a large vessel attracting a distinct and deeper-pocketed buyer than shallow-draft canal homes. Single-family canal and interior properties typically run from about \$700,000 to \$2 million — and that is the segment of the island market that has softened the most, with some

values down roughly 10 to 12 percent from their 2022 peaks. In Country Club Shores, the boater's neighborhood, canal-front homes generally start around \$1.5 million.

What separates the strong end of that range from the weak end is, in a word, depth. Real estate appraisers who specialize in waterfront property consistently treat usable water depth at mean low tide as a core driver of value, not a footnote. “Deepwater” — meaning reliable boat access even at low water — carries a premium; a home where the boat can only leave on a favorable tide does not. Industry analyses of waterfront markets nationwide put the premium for genuine water access at anywhere from 30 to 50 percent over comparable inland homes, and on Longboat the boating infrastructure itself is priced accordingly: a new composite dock with a 10,000-pound lift can add as much as \$250,000 to a canal home's resale value.

That is the calculus the dredging program is quietly underwriting. A formally maintained, town-backed waterway converts an open question — will my canal still float a boat in five years? — into a guarantee a realtor can put in a listing. What is boatable today, the pitch goes, will be boatable tomorrow. For owners who have watched their canal homes lag the rest of the island's recovery, a dredging program is less an amenity than a defense of value.

How other Florida coasts pay the price

Longboat is not the first Gulf Coast community to discover that the romance of canal living comes with a recurring bill, and the experience elsewhere offers both a roadmap and a warning.

In Cape Coral, a city laced with nearly 400 miles of canals, dredging is funded not by a dedicated per-property dredging charge but through the city's Stormwater Fund, which sets aside roughly \$2 million a year for the work. The cautionary tale there is not the cost but the permitting: in 2023, state regulators declined to renew Cape Coral's citywide dredging permit, forcing the city into a far more complex, expensive and slow re-permitting process and compelling it to carve environmentally sensitive areas out into standalone permits. The first of those, at Redfish Point, only began dredging in early 2026. Cape Coral residents are no strangers to assessment sticker shock either — but it has come mainly through the city's utilities-extension program, where individual lots have faced one-time bills in the range of \$33,000 to \$36,000.

Punta Gorda offers the closer parallel, and the more sobering one. There, canal upkeep has been handled since 1996 through dedicated canal maintenance districts — a model in which waterfront owners in Punta Gorda Isles and Burnt Store Isles pay an annual special assessment to a division that maintains seawalls, dredges canals and trims mangroves, advised by resident committees. The structure is stable and predictable. It is also expensive, and it climbs. The single-family assessment in Punta Gorda Isles has risen from \$460 in 2021 to \$1,350 in 2026 — nearly triple in five years — driven by aging seawalls and rising construction costs. A 46 percent jump in a single year drew angry residents to a 2022 budget hearing, one of whom, a 40-year resident, demanded to know how the increase had arrived as “such a surprise.”

Two caveats keep that comparison honest. Punta Gorda's assessments bundle in seawall reconstruction, a major cost driver that Longboat's program does not carry, since the island's plan is focused on dredging rather than seawall work. And after Hurricane Ian, roughly 95 percent of Punta Gorda's seawall repair costs were ultimately covered by FEMA and the state — a vivid illustration of exactly the reimbursement eligibility Tipton has cited as a reason for Longboat to formalize its own program. The lesson Longboat residents may take from the Charlotte County coast is less about whether a maintenance district works than about the durability of the promise that fees will fall: in Punta Gorda, the assessment has only ever gone up.

The shadow of the November ballot

The canal vote does not arrive in a vacuum. It lands in a year when Florida homeowners are being promised the opposite of a new bill.

On June 2, the Legislature placed a sweeping property-tax measure on the November 3 ballot. The amendment, branded “Save Our Homes from Excessive Property Taxes” and championed by Gov. Ron DeSantis, would raise the homestead exemption on non-school property taxes from \$50,000 to \$150,000 in 2027 and to \$250,000 in 2028 — enough, by some estimates, to wipe out non-school property taxes for roughly 60 percent of Florida's homesteaded owners. It requires 60 percent voter approval to take effect, and a state analysis projects it would cut revenue to non-school governments by \$4.6 billion a year initially, growing to \$8.4 billion.

The timing is conspicuous. The same November tax bill that carries Longboat's first canal assessment will land in the same season voters decide whether to slash their property taxes — relief on one line, a new charge on another. For residents already wary of how much government spends, that juxtaposition sharpens every dollar.

Two facts complicate the politics in ways worth understanding. First, the \$620 flat EBU fee is a non-ad-valorem special assessment — it is not a property tax, and no homestead exemption, expanded or otherwise, would reduce it. Canal-facing owners would owe that fee in full regardless of how the November vote goes. Second, the ballot measure's fine print restricts what local property-tax revenue may fund to a defined list — and that list explicitly includes infrastructure, stormwater control and flood-control projects, the very public-benefit grounds on which the town justifies the island-wide 20 percent share of the dredging cost.

Longboat, for its part, is better insulated than most Florida towns from the amendment's bite. Property taxes make up roughly three-quarters of the town's general fund — about \$18.5 million of a \$24 million budget — but by the town's own rough estimate only around a third of island homes carry a homestead exemption at all, and the island's typical property values sit well above the \$250,000 exemption threshold. A measure designed to erase the tax bills of modest homesteads simply does less on an island of multimillion-dollar second homes.

What happens next

If the commission grants the ordinance final approval on its second reading, the assessments will appear on Longboat Key property tax bills in November 2026. The original timeline contemplated physical dredging beginning as late as 2029, but Tipton has been directed to explore short-term financing and is chasing the federal appropriation precisely so the town does not have to wait years for assessment dollars to accumulate. If that money materializes, the dredges could be in the water considerably sooner.

For now, it comes down to one more vote — the culmination of a quarter-century of meetings about mud. After all that time, the question facing Longboat Key is no longer whether to fix its canals. It is whether the island can agree on a fair way to pay for the thing that made it the island in the first place.

Ads that work...

ads@Lbknews.com or 941.387.2200

Business Directory



MESA
PRIMARY & WELLNESS CLINIC

Dr. Nathalia Mesa, MD
Board-Certified Family Medicine Physician
Your health, held with care

NOW ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS!
SAME-DAY APPOINTMENTS
941-251-0600

Primary Care • Wellness • Medicare Accepted
Medical Weight Management
Hydrafacial • Botox • Skin Care

Email: Hello@MesaPrimaryWellness.com
3645 Cortez Rd., W I Ste. 110, Bradenton, FL 34210

MesaPrimaryWellness.com

Loved again
Boutique
UPSCALE WOMEN'S CONSIGNMENT STORE



HIGH END CLOTHING, SHOES, AND ACCESSORIES

- JOHNNY WAS
- CHANEL
- HERMES
- JIMMY CHOO

4141 S. Tamiami Trail #8 • Sarasota
BESIDE TRADER JOE'S
941.702.8159



GREENWICH INTERIORS, LLC

Creating beautiful, functional residential and commercial spaces.

- New construction
- Remodeling
- Project management

We bring your vision to life.

NANCY O'ROURKE, Principal
(941) 279-7500
nancy@greenwichinteriors.com
Greenwichinteriors.com

YOU MAY BE MISSING MEDICARE BENEFITS

- ★ • Turning 65 Soon?
- Save on Doctor Visits
- Get Grocery Benefits

CALL NOW
941-225-8411



KENNETH ZUMBA
Licensed Medicare Specialist

FREE MEDICARE PLAN REVIEWS
Serving Sarasota and the Islands

Cortez Bait & Seafood

Fresher than Fresh!
Local Florida Seafood
Oysters • Shrimp • Clams
Fish Spread • Smoked Mullet



MON - SAT: 10 AM TO 6:30PM | SUN: 10AM TO 5PM
941.794.1547 12110 Cortez Road West
www.cortezbaitandseafood.com Cortez, FL
SEE US ON FACEBOOK



Call for a FREE Evaluation!

SERVICES

- Personal Care
- Respite Care
- Alzheimer's Care
- Light Cleaning
- Med Administration
- Meal Preparation
- Errands & More

ROSA TORRES, OWNER
941-536-6372
epichomecareprovider@gmail.com

See and be Seen
ads@Lbknews.com
941.387.2200

KAREN & ANGELO POMPETTI
Two Generations of Master Barbers

Traditional & Cutting Edge Barbering
38 Years in Business



200 CENTRAL AVE. SUITE 11
ACROSS FROM WHOLE FOODS
484-889-8991 • menshaircutsarasota.com

Steff's Stuff
ANTIQUES AND TREASURES
ESTATES & CONSIGNMENTS ARRIVING DAILY

5380 GULF OF MEXICO DRIVE
IN THE CENTRE SHOPS • 941.383.1901

SteffsStuffLBK.com

Transform Your Interior
Specializing in Window Covering Design and Installation



Blinds & Designs
of Florida

- Blinds
- Shutters
- Drapes & More

941-360-9200

Visit our Showroom
4201 N. Washington Blvd. Sarasota
Mon-Fri 9 am to 5 pm & Sat 10 am to 2 pm
www.blindsanddesignsofflorida.com

DESIGN 2000 Celebrating 27 years on the island!

EXCELLENCE AND EXPERIENCE
IN HAIR AND NAIL DESIGN

941-387-9807

Welcoming the clients and stylists after the closing of David Gregory Salon!

6840 GULF OF MEXICO DRIVE
AT WHITNEY BEACH PLAZA
www.design2000longboatkeyfl.com

THE FISH HOLE 18 HOLES
OPEN 9am-9pm
7 days a week
COME PLAY A ROUND!

ADVENTURE GOLF

115 BRIDGE STREET
BRADENTON BEACH, FL 34217
PHONE: (941) 778-3388 www.THEFISHHOLE.com

ANTIQUE ORIENTAL RUGS.COM



FOR OVER 40 YEARS...
ALL HAND CHOSEN
ALL ONE-OF-A-KIND
BOUGHT • SOLD • APPRAISED

Visit our Sarasota Gallery
Call Robert Mosby
941.925.1025
By appointment only

Ads that work...
ads@Lbknews.com or 941.387.2200

WineTimes



Laughing Gull Lager soars at Key Club as local brewer crafts support for Save Our Seabirds

The Banyan Bar has served Laughing Gull Lager on tap for a while and club members and Resort guests have responded favorably.

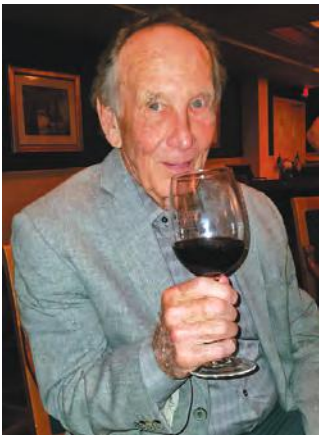
S.W. and Rich Hermansen
Guest Writers
wine@lbknews.com

The beautiful Banyan Bar at The Resort at the Longboat Key Club overlooks a huge swimming pool and one of the finest Gulf of Mexico beaches on the white sand stretching from Siesta Key to Clearwater on the west coast of Florida. On a lovely June afternoon, this location offered an ideal place for an informal tasting of Laughing Gull Lager. A portion of the sales of this premium lager beer go to the Sarasota Save Our Seabirds (SOS) wildlife rescue service at City Island, 1708 Ken Thompson Pkwy, Sarasota 34236 on City Island.

Brian Walton, SOS Executive Director, contacted the Resort about providing a venue for the tasting. The Resort's Food and Beverage Director, Bob Weil, graciously hosted the event. The Banyan Bar has served Laughing Gull Lager on tap for a while and club members and Resort guests have responded favorably. The Banyan Bar staff served pint glasses of the draft lager to those attending the event as they arrived.

SOS Board member Ken Goldberg set the stage for the tasting. He mentioned the role of Laughing Gull Lager in generating support for SOS among wider audiences, and he introduced the 3CarGarage brewmaster, Stu Drymon, as the person to ask about the lager. Stu described the lager as a cold-brewed lager in the German Helles style. Weyermann Pilsner and Munich Malts and Tettnanger Hops keep the International Bitterness Units (IBU) in the lower quarter of the IBU range.

In the glass the draft lager has a bright golden hue with a slight haze indicating body in the brew. The first sip left crisp and cleansing saturates in the mouth. A mellow hint of malt and gentle hops smoothed the 5.2% alcohol by volume. Tasters found the taste refreshing and pleasant. Those attuned



Brian Walton, Danielle Gladding and Ken and Marjie Goldberg sit and sip the lager, as Bob Weil, Ethan Harper and Stuart Drymon enjoy the beer standing.

to American lager styles of beer would find Laughing Gull Lager similar but superior.

Stu introduced Ethan Harper, Founder and Owner of Craft Farm Distribution, the distributor of Laughing Gull Lager, who brought with him a case of the lager in cans. Photographer and graphics artist Marjorie Goldberg, Ken's wife, had designed the distinctive laughing gull image on the faces of the cans. With the aim of due diligence, we tasted the lager in cans. It had a substantial head of foam when freshly poured into a pint glass but tasted the same as the draft lager when the head slowly receded.

SOS Board member Danielle Gladding, her husband Nick Gladding, Longboat Key Commissioner, District 3, and son Zach Kanter also participated in the tasting.

Laughing Gull Lager deserves a place in a line-up of beer taps in a beachy bar alongside Calusa Zote hazy IPA and Big Top's Circus City IPA. It has a light and clean taste that appeals to a wide range of beer lovers, and its sales aid a good cause. The attractive cans offer another option for buyers. Ask for it in restaurants, in bars, and now in stores.

S. W. Hermansen has used his expertise in econometrics, data science and epidemiology to help develop research databases for the Pentagon, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Agriculture, and Health Resources and Services. He has visited premier vineyards and taste wines from major appellations in California, Oregon, New York State, and internationally from Tuscany and the Piedmont in Italy, the Ribera del Duero in Spain, the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale in Australia, and the Orego Valley in New Zealand. Currently he splits time between residences in Chevy Chase, Maryland and St. Armand's Circle in Florida.

Rich Hermansen selected has first wine list for a restaurant shortly after graduating from college with a degree in Mathematics. He has extensive service and management experience in the food and wine industry. Family and friends rate him

as their favorite chef, bartender, and wine steward. He lives in Severna Park, Maryland.



Photographer and graphics artist Marjorie Goldberg designed the distinctive laughing gull image on the face of the cans.

Longboat Key News Sarasota City News

PO Box 8001
Longboat Key, FL 34228
941-387-2200
www.lbknews.com

Steve Reid, Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

Associate Publisher
Melissa Reid

Sales
Lillian Sands
Steve Reid
ads@lbknews.com

Graphic Production
Dottie Rutledge

Letters to the Editor
letters@lbknews.com

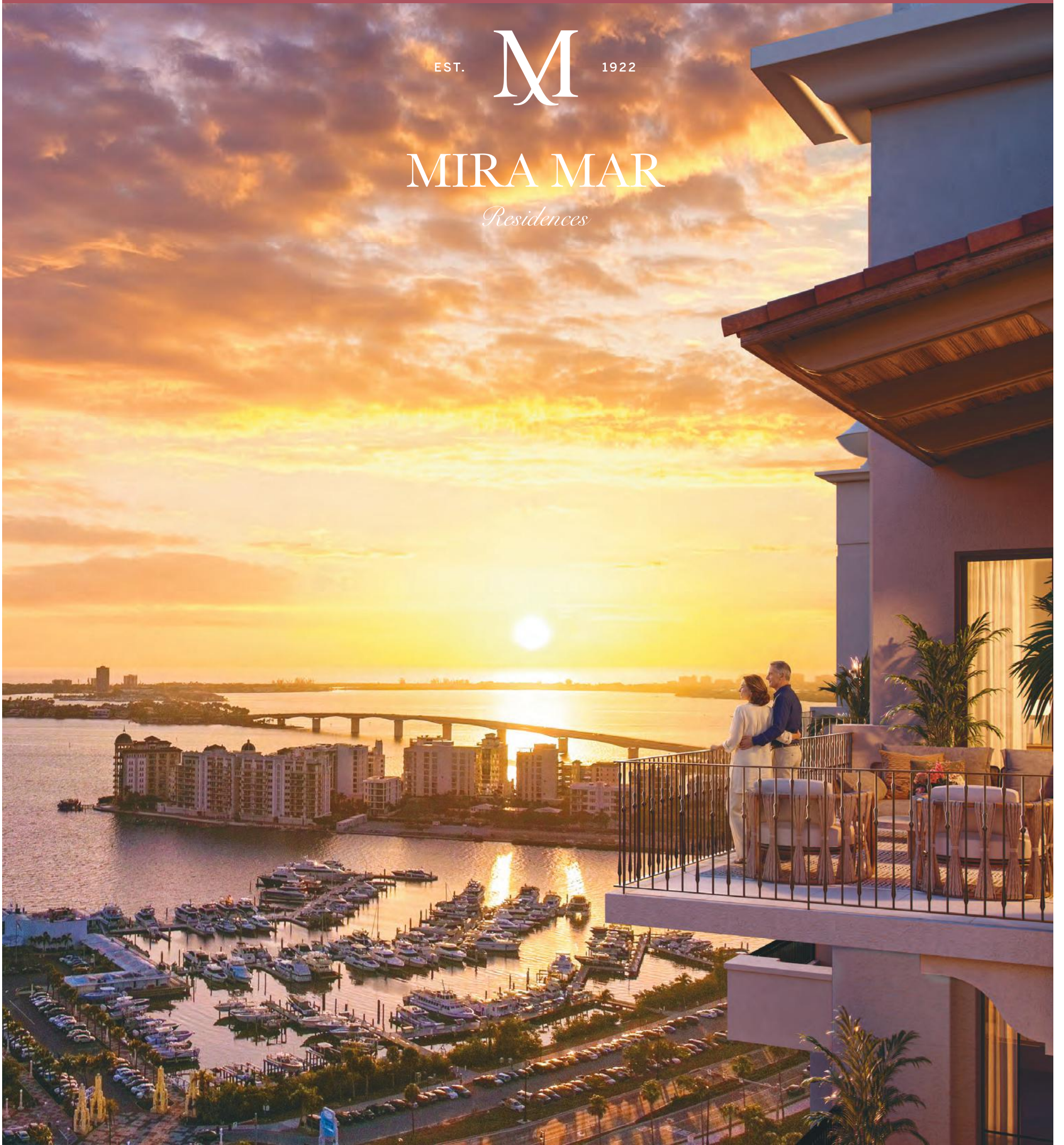
Ads that work... ads@Lbknews.com or 941.387.2200

STUNNING VIEWS | A STORIED HISTORY | PREMIER LOCATION | SUPERIOR QUALITY | A LOCAL TEAM | OUTSTANDING SERVICES & AMENITIES

EST. **M** 1922

MIRA MAR

Residences



THE LAST GREAT ADDRESS ON PALM AVENUE

PRICED FROM THE HIGH \$3 MILLIONS

Discover Luxury Living in The Heart of Downtown Sarasota

MIRAMARSARASOTA.COM | (941) 390 2955 | 1258 NORTH PALM AVENUE, SARASOTA, FL 34236



COLDWELL BANKER
REALTY



ORAL REPRESENTATIONS CANNOT BE RELIED UPON AS CORRECTLY STATING REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DEVELOPER. FOR CORRECT REPRESENTATIONS MAKE REFERENCE TO THIS BROCHURE AND TO THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY SECTION 718.503, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO BE FURNISHED BY A SELLER TO A BUYER OR LESSEE. THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN FILED IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND NO OTHER STATE. THIS IS NOT AN OFFER TO SELL OR SOLICITATION OF OFFERS TO BUY THE CONDOMINIUM UNITS IN STATES WHERE SUCH OFFER OR SOLICITATION CANNOT BE MADE. PRICES AND AVAILABILITY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE ANYTIME WITHOUT NOTICE.